

I was excited to learn more about formative assessments. I met with my mentor and we mapped out ways I could attain new learning about assessments. I met with other Physical Education colleagues during Professional Development and Physical Education meetings. I read assessment articles written by Physical Education professionals. I researched different formative assessments and how to use them to get my students more involved in the learning process. I also incorporated technology by videotaping my students and providing them with feedback.

I met with multiple people within the Physical Education department to discuss how they assess their students. By attending a Physical Education professional development session that was on curriculum writing, one of the sub topics was on assessments. Meeting with the staff allowed me to collaborate with other colleagues in regards to what they use for their formative and summative assessments. My mentor sat down with me and showed me the assessments that she uses for her classes and made suggestions to the assessments I created for my classes. In the beginning of this module I used a few different formative assessments. On my first formative assessment I collected data and realized that the majority of my students were having difficulty. Only 20% of students were able to successfully complete 4 out of the 4 steps for overhand throwing. As a teacher, I had to make adjustments to my teaching and the way I assessed my students so they would be successful and see improvements.

In the article "Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation" by Carnegie Mellon University, it discussed the difference between a formative and summative assessment. In my assessments I was using only a summative assessment, which was their semester report card grade. I learned by reading the article that summative assessments are often high stakes, which means that they have a high point value. Some examples of summative assessments are: a midterm exam, a final project, a paper, and a senior recital. By not incorporating formative assessments I was not able to track my student's skills throughout the units. From this article I learned that a formative assessment helps students "identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work", and helps the teacher "recognize where students are struggling and address problems immediately". This way of assessing my students helps me understand where they are as an individual and where they are as a class. It also allows me to have that one on one conversation with each student and to be able to show him or her what the skill is supposed to look like and what improvements can be done.

Throughout the year with my students I was not tracking their progress on the skills being completed during class, which did not help me when it came to tracking their progression over the units being taught. An example of this was when I was teaching a throwing and catching unit to a third grade class. Students in this class were able to distinguish between underhand and overhand throwing and their skill cues. However when it came to grading them on a rubric, I was only able to watch them perform the skill once rather than reassess them multiple times to see if they

improved their throwing as we progressed over the weeks. I also realized the students were not actively involved in their progress.

After meeting with other Physical Education teachers within the district during a Professional Development Day, I gained some ideas on how to assess my students during their unit. Many of the teachers in the district write the skill cues on a piece of paper and give it to the students to refer back to when throwing and catching throughout the unit or post the skill cues on a poster board and hang it on the wall so students can always refer back to it. Another way I learned to hold the students accountable for their work was to have them create their own rubric with what they felt were the essential cues for these skills. I decided to use a peer assessment rubric and I had the students come up with the essential cues. I wanted to give my students the chance to contribute to the design of the rubric, thus giving each student a better understanding of what was expected and the cues ahead of time. The checklist listed 4 cues that each pair of partners used to grade each other with. This not only made them accountable but also allowed them to be part of the teaching/learning process. An additional way I now hold my student's accountable for the learning of their skills is by providing a skill cue checklist on a piece of paper for them to bring home. I had students bring their paper home and share it with their family members. This allowed for all students to gain extra practice and to include family members in their learning process. With additional practice outside of school the students were able to gain extra practice time and did better on their assessments. Specifically one of the main cues the students were having trouble

with was stepping with their opposite foot when they throw overhand. At the beginning of this module I only had 40% of students able to step in opposition and at the end of module I had 85% of students stepping in opposition correctly. It also was a neat way for students to share what they are learning with someone at home.

One technique my mentor suggested was to assess the students by videotaping each student individually and again as a group throwing and catching. I loved this idea and decided to use it. While videotaping them, I was able to go back and watch their technique. The next class, I called each student over to show them their technique while throwing and catching and pointed out where each student could improve or what they were doing well. This allowed the students to see themselves visually and compare it to someone who was performing the skill correctly. This helped students who are visual learners be able to see specifically which steps they needed improvement on.

In the book, "Classroom Management that Works" by Marzano, it discussed how students need to be shown the assessment that they will be assessed on before being watched. This is supposed to allow for the students to have a better idea what expectations need to be met. One thing I did with my class was to create the assessment as a class and allowed students to come up with cues they believed were the most important in throwing and catching. Creating this assessment as a group held the students accountable for their skills and performance since they were the ones who discussed the cues and what they felt was important. It allowed the

students to be part of the learning process and kept them interested on striving to do better.

After watching the students, I noticed a drastic change in their performance in the skill being taught. By having the students write down what they felt were important cues, what the teacher should look for when assessing them, and what other students should look for when peer assessing, allowed for multiple people to provide feedback to that student on what they were doing correct and what they can still improve upon. As a teacher, I learned that the students should be involved in their grading and assessments so they are aware of exactly what the teacher is looking for. This allows for minimal questions when grading on the entire unit and gives the students a clear understanding of how they are doing.

My practice as a teacher has changed over the past few months of the school year. I now tailor each of my lessons individually to that specific class' need based on the assessments I am implementing. I also understand where my students are struggling and focus on that particular aspect of the lesson. With the use of technology, pre-assessments and assessments throughout the unit, my students are getting much more out of my lesson. For example, students continue to ask to watch themselves on a video to compare what they have done in the past to what they do now. Also, students ask for me to watch them throw the ball to see if they improved based on the rubrics created.

Overall, the students and their assessments have improved over time by allowing the students to see the assessment before being assessed. My class went from 20% of students being able to successfully complete 4 out of the 4 skills to have 60% be able to successfully complete all 4 skills. With this increase, students are now improving their learning daily during their class. Students are more engaged, more invested in their learning, and students communicate about the skills taught outside of school to others. For example, students are now discussing various throwing games and techniques that we do in class and comparing them with what they learn when they play little league baseball or softball. I also had students talk about watching professional baseball on television and how the Red Sox outfielders really need to step with their opposite foot to achieve power to throw the ball from the outfield to home plate. They are starting to make real life connections to the lessons and skills we are doing in class.